



If you believe, belong.

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September 16, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall  
Ranking Member  
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Bob Gibbs  
Chairman  
Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee

The Honorable Timothy Bishop  
Ranking Member  
Water Resources & Environment Subcommittee

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The American Soybean Association wishes to express its support for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). We appreciate very much your efforts to bring this legislation forward in a bipartisan manner and to attempt meaningful reforms to a waterways infrastructure system that is hampered by inefficiency and a lack of funding.

ASA strongly supports efforts to address the much needed repairs and revitalization of our aging waterways infrastructure. U.S. soybean farmers rely on a healthy waterways infrastructure to move their soybeans to market. Soybeans are our nation's largest agricultural export, and approximately two-thirds of the soybeans we export are shipped out of ports in the Mississippi Gulf Region. Of that, nearly 90 percent rely on the inland waterways system to arrive at those ports, so having reliable and efficient waterways and ports is essential to maintaining our competitiveness in global markets.

Specific aspects of the WRRDA supported by ASA include provisions to:

- streamline environmental reviews;
- establish hard deadlines and cost caps on project studies;
- allow non-federal interests to contribute funds to expedite project components;
- annually increase the amount of funding that is provided from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) for its intended purposes of port maintenance and dredging; and
- free up money and increase the capacity of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) by reducing the amount contributed from the IWTF to the Olmsted Lock and Dam project and requiring the Corps to study and report on potential funding sources for the IWTF.

ASA believes that these provisions represent a very good start to fixing a broken process. We also believe that these reforms will need to be supplemented with additional funding to sustain, repair or replace waterways infrastructure, particularly locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River System,

which are beyond their intended life expectancy and in danger of becoming inoperable. We look forward to working with you as the process moves forward and to achieving enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Danny Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Danny Murphy  
President